
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	3618 Ordway Street NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	December 17, 2015	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	16-058	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Frances McMillen	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant Pamela Steele, with drawings prepared by Manion and Associates, requests concept review for constructing a new roof and a dormer window on the rear roof, and expanding an existing rear addition at 3618 Ordway Street NW in the Cleveland Park Historic District.

Property Description

Designed by Louis T. Rouleau for owner and builder Boss and Phelps, 3618 Ordway Street was built in 1924. The subject property is a two-story Colonial Revival style house with a side gable roof. Two-story additions are located on the west and rear elevations.

Proposal

The proposal calls for a new roof, a shed dormer window on the rear roof slope, and expanding an existing rear addition. The new roof would change the pitch from 6:12 to 7:12 at the front of the house. The dormer at the rear would be inset slightly from the side of the house.

Evaluation

Altering the form, pitch, or profile of a contributing building in an historic district is not typically a compatible preservation treatment, and should be approached with particular care in a district made up predominately of detached houses (such as Cleveland Park), where roofs are a particularly important defining feature. Altering a roof's form is generally not compatible with the character of a property, as it changes the proportions and façade composition. The Board's guideline, *Roofs on Historic Buildings*, states "rarely is it appropriate to change the shape of an existing roof. To do so almost always drastically alters the character of a historic building. If, for compelling functional or economic reasons, the shape of the roof must be changed, it should be done in such a manner as to retain the historic character of the building."

The Board has reviewed only a few instances of alterations to a roof's shape and profile in Cleveland Park. The Board denied a proposal to raise the ridge of a bungalow at 2930 Porter Street NW (HPA #07-317), finding that the alteration to the original clay tile roof changed the scale and proportions of the house. In 2011, a proposal to raise the ridge of a modest cottage style house at 3603 Norton Place NW was approved because the alteration would not result in the loss of, or fundamentally alter, the house's architectural character. However, neither of those

proposals proposed the more dramatic alteration of entirely removing and changing the pitch of the roof. The only known instance of that type of alteration reviewed by the Board was in 2010, where the Board denied an after-the-fact alteration of the roof at 1909 12th Street NW (HPA #10-310) finding that the unpermitted change in roof pitch and height dramatically changed its form.

The application states, “the low slope fosters large ice dams in winter, which have caused considerable ongoing damage to the house from leaking water. The new slope will allow for better drainage and usable attic space.” The proposal would require removal of the entire roof and the change in pitch would alter the appearance of the house. Material has not been provided that documents the water damage or demonstrates that a change to the roof pitch is a “compelling functional” reason or the only option available to remedy the problem. The applicant is encouraged to explore alternate methods to address the issue that do not require changing the appearance of the roof or house.

Adding a floor to the rear addition and a rear dormer window to the existing roof could be a compatible alteration to the house if designed so that the original roof form can still be read. The dormer should be located below the ridge and inset sufficiently from the edge of the house to maintain the roof’s profile.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find a rear dormer and expansion of the existing rear addition compatible, but find altering the roof pitch incompatible with the house and the historic district. The applicant is encouraged to revise the proposal so that the original roof is maintained and resubmit to the Board for additional review.